Wheat production

1206. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite an increase in wheat acreage by over 1.5 million hectares, the projection of wheat output would be 72.50 million tonnes, which is lower than the output of the previous year;

(b) if so, whether Government would be forced to import more wheat to meet the shortage of wheat in the country; and

(c) if so, the steps being considered in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As against area coverage of 26.48 million hectares during 2005-06 an area of 27.11 million hectares is expected to be covered under wheat during 2006-07 (as per 2nd advance estimates released on 05.02.2007) which is higher by 0.63 million hectares. As against 69.35 million tonnes of wheat during 2005-06, the production is expected to be 72.50 million tonnes during 2006-07 (as per 2nd advance estimates released on 05.02.2007) which is higher by 3.15 million tonnes.

(b) and (c) The option of import is resored when there is gap between demand and supply and price tend to rise affecting the consumers. The availability of stocks of wheat in the central pool is also an important determinant in this regard. For encouraging production of wheat, the Government has fixed the minimum support price at 750/- per quintal for 2007-08 which is Rs. 100/- per quintal higher than the price announced for 2006-07. Appropriate steps are in progress to ensure that adequate quantities are procured by the Government to meet the requirement of public distribution system and other welfare schemes.

Help to fishing sector

1207. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering its potential to support fishing, foreign exchange as also employment generation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/to be taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Considering the potential of fishing, the Government has implemented programmes under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes for (i) Development of post harvest infrastructure (ii) Motorization of traditional craft (iii) Diversification of fishing (iv) Fishermen Development Rebate on HSD oil used by fishing vessels of below 20m length (v) Introduction of intermediate craft (vi) Enhancing safety of fishermen at sea and (vii) Development of fish processing and marketing infrastructure. Assistance is also given for improving pre-processing and processing infrastructure and value addition of fish exported.

So far six major fishing harbours, 40 minor fishing harbours and 151 fish landing centres have been completed and put to use, 46336 traditional craft motorised and six trawlers converted into long lining. Letter of permission has also been issued to 21 Indian companies for operating resource specific vessels in the Indian EEZ.

Setting up of a Veterinary University in Andhra Pradesh

1208. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a proposal from Government of Andhra Pradesh to set up a Veterinary University;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to improve the education in the dairying sector to get the best results; and

(d) the steps proposed to encourage establishment of academic institutions which would improve the dairying sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University is already functioning at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.

(c) A proejct namely Experiential Learning-hands-on-training on the various subjects of agriculture, animal husbandary and dairying has been launched during 2006-07.